

FALLS CHURCH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"There is more treasure in books than in all the pirate's loot on Treasure Island."

~ Walt Disney



School Budget Gets Full Funding Recommendation

I'm pleased to report that Falls Church City Manager Wyatt Shields has recommended to the city council full funding for the school board's FY08 budget. While the budget process is just beginning for the city council, I see this as a very encouraging development. The city council's newly enacted vision statement includes "World Class Schools," and I know the council members are committed to that vision, as are we.

This year's proposed school budget includes a 2 percent pay increase and a step increase for all school division employees. It also includes funding for a division-wide online learning management system, which, if the budget remains intact, will be piloted in our schools next year. You will be hearing more about that in the coming weeks from the technology resource teachers in all of our schools.

Each budget process is difficult in its own way. This year, because of several economic factors, we knew we were faced with a lean budget for the coming year. I want to thank our school-based and division administrators for evaluating existing programs and practices to see where funding could be reprogrammed to support the division's strategic plan. I also want to thank teacher, support staff and city leaders for their support throughout the process thus far, and I want to encourage you to be active members in the process. The council has scheduled several public work sessions on the school budget, and will adopt a budget at its meeting on April 23. You can access the budget information via the city's Web site: www.fallschurchva.gov.

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2007 City Council Budget Process

General Government/Schools Financial Forecast

March 15
7:30 p.m.
City Hall Training Center (Work Session)

Budget First Reading

March 26
7:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers (Regular Meeting)

Schools Budget Review

March 29
7:30 p.m.
City Hall Training Center (Work Session)

Budget Second Reading

April 9
7:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers (Regular Meeting)

Schools Budget Review (If Needed)

April 12
7:30 p.m.
City Hall Training Center (Work Session)

Budget Wrap Up

April 16
7:30 p.m.
City Hall Training Center (Work Session)

Budget Review (If Needed)

April 19
7:30 p.m.
City Hall Training Center (Work Session)

Budget Third Reading and Adoption

April 23
7:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers (Regular Meeting)

Note: Additional meetings regarding city services are also scheduled. For a full listing, visit www.fallschurchva.gov.

TJ Educator Named Agnes Meyer Award Winner



Congratulations to Thomas Jefferson Elementary School teacher **Denise O'Neil**, who has been selected to receive this year's Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher Award. The selection was made public Saturday, March 10 by the *Washington Post*.

O'Neil is a veteran educator with more than 25 years of teaching experience. She earned her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in speech pathology from the University of Rhode Island. She signed on with the Falls Church City Public Schools in 1993. She currently serves as a speech and language teacher at Thomas Jefferson Elementary School. She also chairs the school's Child Study Committee, serves as a co-team leader for special education staff and is a member of the BIE Advisory Board.



Denise O'Neil is the 2007 FCCPS Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher Award winner.

O'Neil will be invited to attend a recognition reception at the Washington Post in April and will receive a cash award. She and the four other FCCPS nominees will also be recognized at a school board reception later this spring.

Agnes Meyer Honor Roll

- 2006 - Carol Monsess, MD
- 2005 - Mary Jo Webster, GMHS
- 2004 - Emily Florence, TJ
- 2003 - Cay Wiant, GMMS
- 2002 - June Chalou, TJ
- 2001 - Frank Marino, GMHS
- 2000 - Linda Johnsen, GMHS
- 1999 - Patricia English-Sand, TJ
- 1998 - Nancy Brown, TJ
- 1997 - John Ballou, GMHS
- 1996 - Heidi Lang, TJ
- 1995 - Grace Risetto, GMHS
- 1994 - Lois Blevins, MD
- 1993 - Martha Ramey, TJ
- 1992 - Frank Sheedy, GMHS
- 1991 - Gail Lanouette, TJ
- 1990 - Robert W. Snee, GMHS
- 1989 - Trudy Taylor, TJ
- 1988 - Michael J. Hoover, GMHS
- 1987 - Ann Felker, TJ
- 1986 - Steven J. Klass, GMHS
- 1985 - Mary Lee Tatum, GMHS
- 1984 - Lindy Hockenberry, GMMS

Employee News and Notes

FCCPS Hires New Food Service Supervisor



*Richard Kane
FCCPS Food Service
Supervisor*

Welcome to new FCCPS Food Service Supervisor **Richard Kane**! Richard comes to us from the U.S. Naval Research Lab where he managed the food service operation. Prior to that he managed food services at Georgetown Preparatory School. Richard says he was attracted to the FCCPS because he enjoys the students. He says one of his first priorities is to "talk to the kids" to see what they like most about the school lunch program.

Farewell to Christian Salazar and Brice Smith

Goodbye and good luck to FCCPS Facilities Manager **Christian Salazar**. Christian has accepted a facilities management position with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Las Vegas, Nevada. The move also puts Christian and his family closer to his wife, Angela's, parents.

Dave Hamill of Aramark will serve as Interim Facilities Supervisor until a permanent replacement can be hired.

Best wishes to FCC-TV Cable Coordinator **Brice Smith** in his new position as photographer with Belo Communications in Washington, DC. Brice will cover national news for a Belo-owned network of local television stations across the country.

FCCPS Baby News



Sebastian Lucas

Congratulations to FCCPS school bus driver **Yolanda Jordan** on the birth of her grandson. Sebastian Lucas was born on December 13, 2006 and weighed in at 7 lbs, 11 oz. and measured 21 inches tall. Sebastian's mother, Patricia Jordan, is an alumna of George Mason High School.

What's on Your Nightstand?

That's the question we posed to several FCCPS employees in conjunction with ReadAcrossAmerica Week. Here's what some of our staff members are currently reading:

I read the magazines Business 2.0 and Fast Company on a regular basis. It lets me keep up with new trends and ideas in business.

Richard Kane,
FCCPS Food Service Supervisor

My nightstand typically has an electronic "sudoku" as well as administration materials for the Saturday program (Cultural Academy for Excellence - CAFE) where I tutor. However, I do a lot of my "reading"

through recorded books on my daily commute. This maximizes the hours spent on the road and reduces stress. Current companions on my passenger seat are **Scandal Takes a Holiday** by Lindsey Davis (a Marcus Didius Falco Mystery) and **Lion in the Valley** by Elizabeth Peters. Both are installments in series I am enjoying.

Juanita Briscoe, FCCPS Testing Coordinator

Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America by Barbara Ehrenreich. The author tries living on minimum wage. She meets others struggling to survive. In reading this, you gain an appreciation of what it is to live below

the poverty level. It's a little depressing. Many nights I opt to do the Washington Post crossword puzzle instead.

Betty Pitera, GMHS

Currently or recently I have been reading **Mayor of MacDougal Street**, the memoir of influential folkie Dave Van Ronk; **Forever** by Pete Hamill, the story of an Irish boy's journey to New York in the 1600's and beyond; and **Star-Making Machinery** by Geoffrey Stokes, the story of the making of Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airman's self-titled album in the mid-70's. A great look at the business side of the music industry and how the record companies ripped off the artists.

Bobby Kaplow, Day Care Supervisor

FCCPS Travelogue

Employee: Margie Speir, GMHS Secretary

Destination: The Dutch Caribbean Island of Saba. The dormant volcano is five square miles of rugged terrain. Its cliffs rise from the sea to a rain forest-covered peak almost 3000 feet high. Three small, quaint villages house families, government offices and a medical school in white structures with red roofs. The island is surrounded by a protected marine park.

Favorite Sights: Our excitement began when our small, commuter plane landed on Saba's 1300 foot runway—somewhat like a carrier landing without arresting cables. That was eclipsed only by the 40mph van rides around the winding roads up and down the mountain as we traveled back and forth to the small port where we embarked on each day's diving. Our dives ranged from 100-foot deep volcanic pinnacles to more shallow lava flows covered with coral and sponges. Sea life we saw included black tip sharks, sea turtles, and small critters like colorful flat worms, nudibranches, and translucent cleaner shrimp. In a once-in-a-lifetime experience, we found two octopi mating in broad daylight. To their great embarrassment, we watched them for 10 minutes and took pictures.



Flag of Saba



Margie meets a new friend





MEH and GMHS Projects Funded

The Falls Church Education Foundation made two winter grant awards to support educational programs at Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School and George Mason High School. Funded projects are listed below:

All MEHMS Reads—*The Story of My Life: an Afghan Girl on the Other side of the Sky* (Phase II)

Farah Ahmedi will visit Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School on March 21st to speak during a school assembly. Ahmedi fell victim to a land mine explosion when she seven years old, and her book chronicles her harrowing experiences in escaping war-torn Afghanistan with her mother. She will recount her childhood in the war zone and talk about the challenges she has faced as a result of losing her leg as well as trying to adapt to living in the United States.

The other project that received a winter foundation grant is:

The Chesapeake Bay/Tripps Run Watershed Experience – Authentic Student Research

More than 400 high school science students will participate in ongoing scientific and environmental research by testing, monitoring and reporting on the water quality of Tripp's Run, a Chesapeake Bay Watershed stream.

The Falls Church Education Foundation awards grants to support educational programs twice per year. To learn more about the foundation and the grant process, visit www.fcedf.org.

A Soldier's Thanks to GMHS



Hello Mrs. Shields,

I want to thank you and your students for the boxes of snacks and toiletries. It's always a good day when you get back from working and you are told you have something in the mail, and even better if its something that can be eaten.

Here is a little bit about myself, I'm a specialist(e-4) in the 1st Infantry Division stationed in Schweinfurt, Germany. Living in Europe has been an experience but there is no place like America. This is my second tour in Iraq the first time was in 2004, OIF II and I was stationed northeast of here 30 miles from the Iranian border. When my unit first got here we were motorized infantry patrolling in and around Abu Grahیب market. But my platoon got moved from that task to do what our jobs are and what we are trained to do which is Field Artillery. We now sit in howitzers 12 hours a day and shoot counter fire missions stopping insurgent fighters from firing indirect rockets and mortars at the FOB. I'm from San Antonio, Texas and when we redeploy back to our home station in Germany, I will be getting out of the army and heading on back home.

Please tell Alina thank you greatly for her time and energy to send these two packages. I was trying to write her a thank you after I received the first one but sending mail the old fashioned way gets pretty tricky over here at times. Once again thank you and your students for your thoughts and prayers and please know that your kindness means a great deal to the soldiers over here.

James Bookout, U.S. Army

How You Can Help

Several months ago, GMHS students and staff "adopted" a U.S. Army Artillery Battery from Schweinfurt, Germany, when they learned that the commander is married to George Mason High School graduate Gabriela Yaselli Egan ('96). They sent holiday greetings and care packages to CPT James M. Egan and the other soldiers in his unit.

Now, the group is collecting personal care items, non-perishable snacks and other supplies to send to the troops. If you'd like to contribute, contact high school teachers Kent Foster at fosterk@fccps.org or Suzanne Planas at planass@fccps.org for more information.

